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V. Bhaskara Rao

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## WRITE WITH TACT

'If language is not correct then what is said is not what is meant; if what is said is not what is meant what ought to be done remains undone'.

CONFUCIUS

No wonder 'what ought to be done' in organisations 'remains undone' because 'what is said is not what is meant'.

Writing is used to inform, instruct, influence, and even inspire people to do something or stop them from doing a thing.

Such an important activity does not get  
the talent, attention, care (concern  
for the reader )and time it deserves in most organisations.

In organisations usually what is labelled as 'urgent' is done and the important work is neglected till, of course, it becomes urgent and gets labelled as 'urgent'. With the result you find yourself writing (or dictating) at top speed.

At the same time, you enjoy a false sense of pride of being prompt, efficient, and punctual, while in reality you waste the time of the reader who is puzzled at what you have written. In the process you waste your time because you are required to write again to explain the meaning of what you have written.

Remedy: *WRITE WITH TACT*: talent, attention, care and time.

To act with attention, care, and in time, is a matter of choice.

What about talent?

Talent is often latent.

It becomes actual with application of mind and systematic practice.

This booklet gives you an approach to actualise the latent talent.

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## WRITING MAKETH AN EXACT MAN

As the writer and the reader are separated by distance and time, writing suffers on two counts. It is neither 'face to face' nor 'two-way'.

Hence you have to be exact. To be exact remember to

Exchange your ideas with others  
X - ray reader's mind.  
Address clearly  
Correct and  
Temper the text with reason and emotion

### TWICE AS EXACT AS THE ARCHER



A written message is a missile. Once it leaves the hand it can not be retrieved.

The archer atleast, knows he has missed the target; but the writer does not.

The writer, therefore, has to be twice as exact, once for his own clarity, a second time the reader's.

There are three stages of writing:

ANTE-WRITING  
WRITING  
EDITING

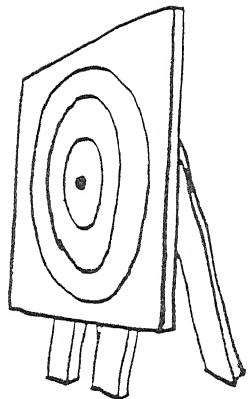
If you take sufficient care of the three stages of writing then you can win the **awe** of the reader.

## ANTE - WRITING:

Before writing you have to think of your own clarity.

Think APT. Audience, Purpose, and Technique.

- \* Who is your reader? A friend, or a fellow professional, a superior or subordinate? or a customer?
- \* What is the purpose? How important is it? Is it to inform or influence? What action do you expect from your reader?
- \* What is the technique? what language? What form? What mode of communication do you want to use? How fast do you want to reach the reader?



If you don't think APT, what you write may not be what you mean and what ought to be done will remain undone; for he may not understand what you write. If he understands, he may not accept what you say.

If he accepts, he may not act the way you wish him to. Even if he does, he may not act in time.

Think of your attitudes right. At this stage it is worthwhile to check your attitudes towards the audience and the purpose.



Your initial reaction could be defensive, evasive, ambiguous and rule-minded. DEAR.

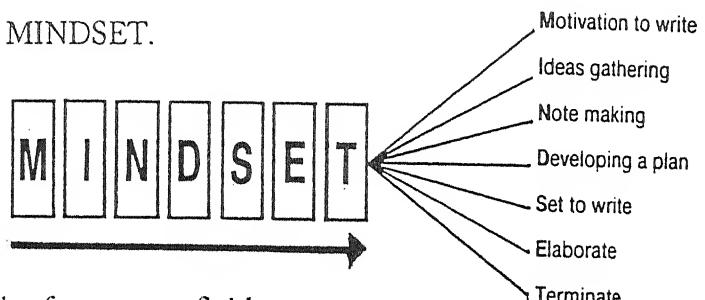
Although dear to you, it may cost you or your company dear: You may lose a friend, or your company a customer. You may annoy a superior or displease a subordinate or a colleague. Both you and your company can lose in the process.

Your one purpose is to persuade the reader. You may be a good marketing manager but may not use marketing approach in writing. Remember to 'sell' your ideas to your readers.

# WRITING, REWRITING and EDITING.

Writing is a process not well understood by all.

For the poor writers, it is a MINDSET.



It's a seven stage straightjacket from start to finish with no turning back. An athletic race!

On the other hand good writers know it as a non-linear recursive exercise.

They also know how to make it work for them.

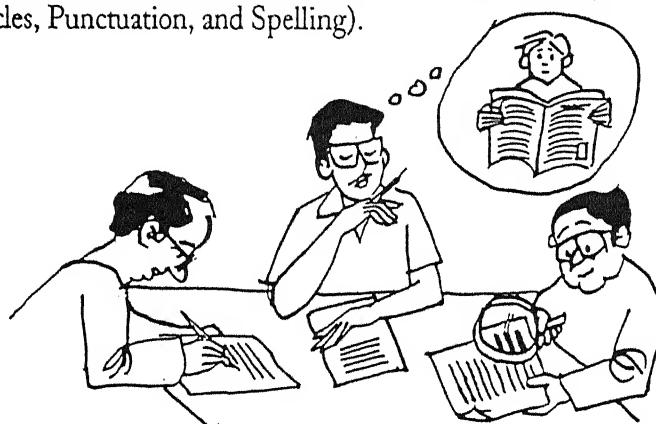
They go backwards and forwards between stages. Drafting, redrafting, planning and replanning, they iterate till they are **exact**: What they say and what they mean are identical.

## EDITING:

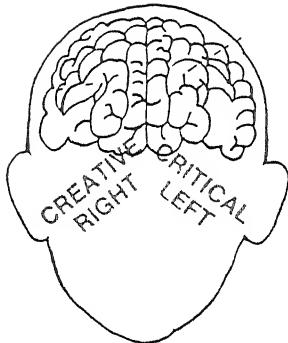
For poor writers editing means correcting spelling and marking punctuation and nothing more.

For good writers editing is one more opportunity to examine the text from the reader's perspective.

Only after making certain final readjustments of the text will they turn to fill GAPS (in Grammar Articles, Punctuation, and Spelling).



## WRITE WITH FORCE a design for practice.



FREE WRITING, ORGANISING, REVISING with feed back  
CORRECTING the text and ENERGISING

Two phases of writing : CREATIVE PHASE & CRITICAL PHASE. Creativity is not restricted to writing poetry or story writing.

The creative phase is concerned with idea generation and the critical phase is concerned with exactitude - complete and correct communication.

Separate the two phases. The two phases correspond to the two hemispheres of the human brain, the right brain with the creative phase and the left with the critical phase. Brain scientists are agreed that the two hemispheres operate out of phase:

When one is dominant the other is dormant.

As the literate man uses more of the left which is concerned with the language skills, the creative right lies dormant most of the time.

You can forcibly alter the cerebral dominance by separating the two phases of writing, and augment each hemisphere by some device.

### FREE WRITING

Free Writing is writing freely as fast as you can without caring for correctness, grammar or syntax. It is just thinking on paper, an interplay of writing and thinking in which the primary objective is to generate as many ideas as possible in the shortest time. Like brain storming which is done in a group free writing is a SPORT:

Suspending judgement

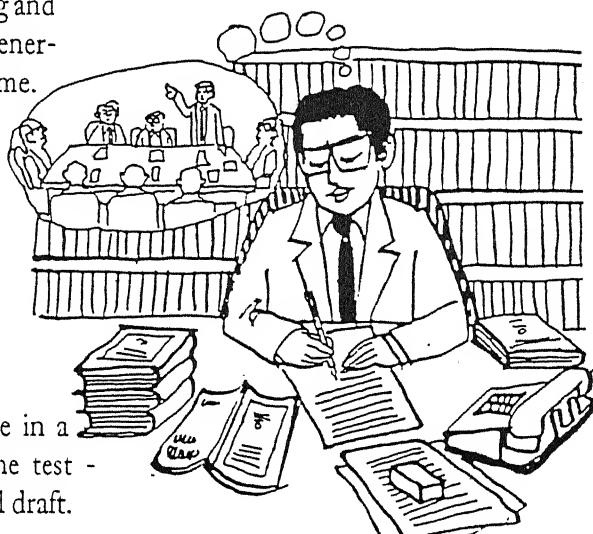
Proliferation of ideas in an

Open

Relaxed atmosphere with a

Time limit.

There is no risk in this wild exercise because in a separate phase, these ideas will be put to the test - evaluated for inclusion or exclusion in the final draft.

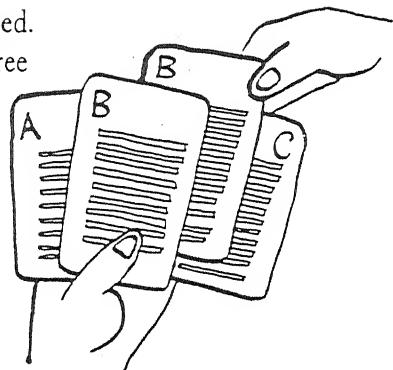


# ORGANISING

You have now a jumble of ideas which have to be organised. Here is a wise SAW : Sorting Arranging Weaving... Three analogies for organising.

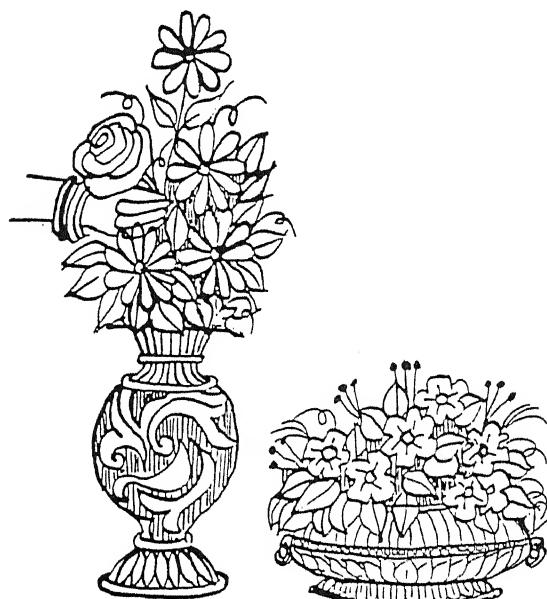
## Analogy 1 Sorting of cards

As the game progresses, the rummy player picks up cards, sorts and re-sorts to match them to make sets and sequences. He knows what to discard and when? Often it pays to hold on to a free card.



It's a leftbrain function linear, logical, and conventional. You as a writer can make sets and sequences within sequences. One conventional sequence is - ABC: Attention (introduction), Body and Conclusion. Within this there can be logical sequences aligned with sets of evidences. Such an organisation of ideas facilitates the reader to scan, skim, and skip.

## Analogy 2 Arranging flowers & beads



On the other hand a floral arranger, anADEPT,

ASSEMBLES blossoms, stems, and leaves.  
DRIES them for weeks.

ENVISAGES the final product.

PRUNES and cuts and

TRIMSthemtomatchwith the original de-sign.

You too can be an ADEPT like him:  
Assemble and Deliberate on the ideas, En-visage the final outcome, Put the ideas together and Temper the text.

The floral arranger may even modify the design as he builds it up on carefully worked out principles and practices.

The design also varies according to the container used.

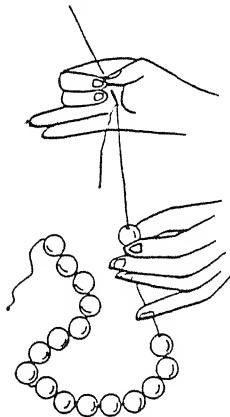
It's right brain creation, a non-linear, and holistic.

## ARRANGING

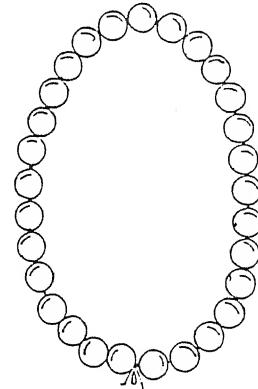
The on-looker comprehends at a glance the Aesthetic, Balanced, & Colourful presentation. He is awe-struck by the sheer beauty.

How can you produce a non-linear beauty with language which is essentially linear?

You have to address to the reader's right brain with illustrations & pictures which represent and enhance what is written.



Show diagrams depicting the inter connectedness of different concepts so that the reader can glance at once the coherent presentation. You should also present different shades of view points and finally balance the message.



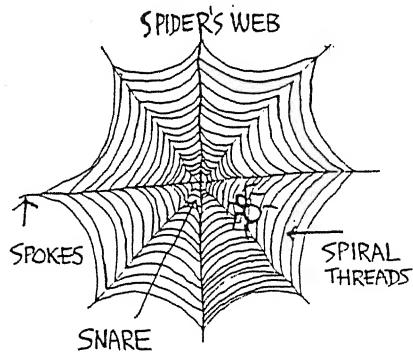
Alternatively, you may simply arrange ideas sequentially

with a running thread connecting them. In the end tie the loose ends together to complete the string of ideas.

**Analogy 3** Yet another way of organising is the **Weaving** a web the way a spider builds a web: it sets

- Scaffolding at the centre and puts up strong & sticky
- Spokes which run from centre to edge and lays
- Spiral threads over the spokes, and finally makes a closely spaced
- Snare at the centre and waits for the prey.

You can think of similar design for organising your thoughts. The process is linear but the outcome is non-linear. It is a complex network of ideas.



There is careful weaving in this. The reader's attention is drawn to the core message. Major points are in place (like the spokes) over them, verifiable facts and valid assumptions are laid connecting all of them (circular threads) and finally the core message, complete, concrete, and cohesive, is presented to the reader. You as the writer wait for results. This is not enough.

## REVISING

Revise with reader based feed back. Give your text to a friend or colleague to act as a substitute reader. Ask him not correct it to fill the gaps (grammer, articles, punctuations and spellings).

Ask him to give feed back on clarity, coherence, completeness, and concreteness.

You will get responses like:

It doesn't make sense to me .. It is confusing to me.

It is one sided .. not complete .. It is impractical

Based on the feed back you can make CORE changes.

Correct the language for clarity (see pages 9 and 10).

Organise again for coherence.

Reveal yourself for completeness.

Exemplify for concreteness.

Reorganising : you may have to re-sort to make sets and sequences of ideas to make a 'show'. Or the string of ideas is too simple to treat the complex subject which requires careful weaving of a web of ideas. Or the format and the purpose match or the balancing of the whole message may require relook.

Reveal yourself : Look for any missing information withheld deliberately or inadvertently.

Finally give concrete examples  
which will make abstract ideas  
practical.

You've exchanged views.  
Thereby you could X-ray  
reader's mind. Now you have  
to address clearly, correct, and  
temper the text with reason  
and emotion.

That comes next.

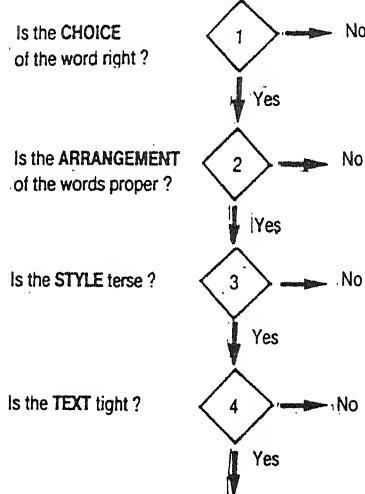


## CORRECT THE TEXT

the critical phase.

Give rest to the right brain and activise the left, which is concerned with the language.

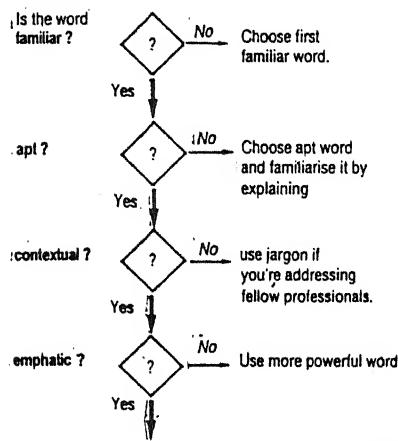
To augment the left brain **CAST** about a device - an algorithm , a step by step method.



Step 1: The words employed should be such as to convey to the reader the meaning of the writer.

Lord Macaulay.

To choose a right word you FACE four factors:



Correct grammar and syntax, are of no importance so long as one makes one's meaning clear.'



Step 2:Arrangement of words:

Proper words in proper places make the true definition of style.

Swift.

Style apart it has practical significance.

Improper placing of words gives rise to change of mood .

Misplaced emphasis.

Opposite meaning.

Offensive to the reader.

Doubtful meaning.

There are four STAR separations which grammarians

resent. Separation of

Subject from the predicate,

To, from the verb,

Auxiliary from the verb,

Relative from its antecedent,

by intervening words, phrases, and clauses keep the reader waiting an unconscionable time for the meaning.

You may follow these conventions of the grammar or follow the advise given by George Orwell:

## Step 3:STYLE

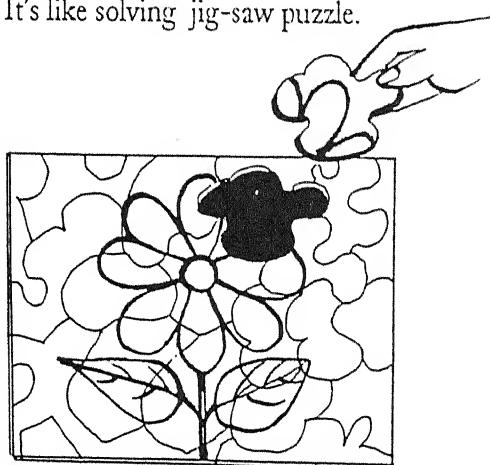
### SIMPLIFYING SENTENCES

Long passages look ugly and they puzzle the reader. The reader is made to wait before he grasps the meaning. He will not be able to read rapidly.

But too many short sentences may mar the flow. A balance has to be struck. Usually free-writing renders sentences long and incomplete. It is at this stage you must consider breaking down the long sentences into smaller and simpler ones and fit them together. It requires DEFT handling.

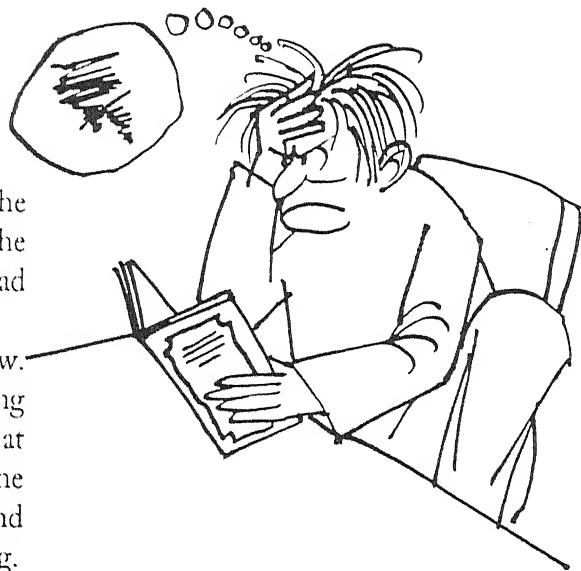
Divide long sentences,  
Examine beauty and clarity.  
Fit them together to emerge  
Total picture.

It's like solving jig-saw puzzle.



## Step 4 : TIE TOGETHER:

When you break down the sentences into smaller sentences cohesion may suffer. You have to tie them together consciously.



For tying you can use a simple rule: R+P i.e Referent + Proposition. Each sentence contains things, ideas and people, any one, two, or all of them.

Like the accountant who brings forward account balances, you can bring forward a referent from the earlier sentence and add a proposition, something new. Now proceed to fill the **GAPS**:

Correct the text for Grammar, Articles, Punctuation, and Spelling. The die is CAST.

As the archer bends the bow holding it firm and stable, before releasing the arrow, the writer must tend the language fixing his mind on the reader.

## ENERGISING:

The language is 'CAST' unshakable - concise and correct. But in the process some of the original force would have been lost. Hence there is a need to revitalise the text.

The bow is bent and the dart is ready; it must fly swiftly - energetically towards its target. For this, you have to stretch the string to allow the arrow to dart off.

Your goal is top **GEAR**:

Greater clarity with  
Emphasis on  
Action for  
Results.

What is said is what is meant and hence what ought to be done is done well.

Use SURE means for it

State the opposite

Use action verbs,

Redundancy, Reiteration &  
Emotional appeal.

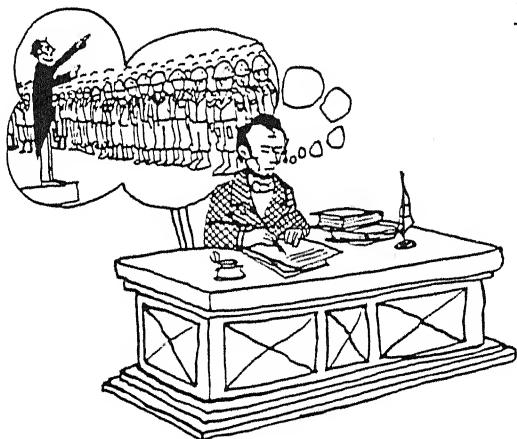
all these put the message in top gear.

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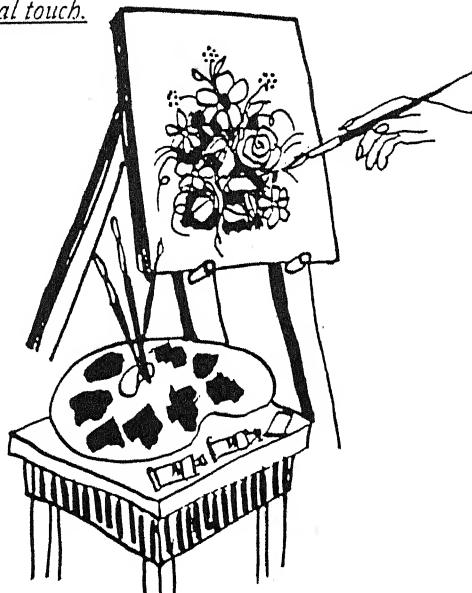
In Gettysburg speech you can identify all of them. There are also occasions for turn around-managers to appeal to employees to make sacrifices or meet the deadlines. The principle is the same in all the cases: **reason plus emotional appeal**.

Under all circumstances you must avoid impersonal passives like 'It is felt'. Use first person, active voice, and action verbs. For such writing you need help from both the brains: the left supplying the words, the right finding creative ways of arranging them!.

*The final touch.*



*'.....government of the people, for the people and by the people shall not perish from the earth'.*



## CONCLUSION

Writing no doubt makes you an exact man.

In sum, Exact man

- \* Exchanges views.
- \* X-rays other's mind.
- \* Addresses clearly,
- \* Corrects &
- \* Tempers own behaviour.

Any book designed to guide people to write effectively runs the risk of being judged against its own precepts.



I was fully aware of this and I am happy to say that I have gained considerably following the precept; 'Write with FORCE'. Thanks to the recursive process followed, this final draft is the result of several revisions with the feedback obtained from surrogate readers.

It can still be improved upon. But there is a point where I had to stop and see that the book reaches you sooner than later.

Writing with FORCE is a new habit you may have to cultivate. It is an exercise in creativity and exactitude.

Like all good habits it takes Motivated, Mindful and Meaningful (3 Ms ) effort.

I have given you a meaningful design WRITE WITH FORCE. I have also tried to motivate you to cultivate the new habit. Now be mindful of what you write.



